

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-03 EB-03 SIL-01 LAB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-10 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-14 USIA-04 AID-05 DRC-01 /067 W

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R 110730Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8544

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SEDU, IR

SUBJECT: SHAH PUSHES EDUCATIONAL REFORM

REF: A. TEHRAN 8494; B. TEHRAN 8133; C. TEHRAN 6505

SUMMARY: IN PAST SEVERAL MONTHS SHAH HAS SPOKEN REPEATEDLY OF NEED FOR SWEEPING EDUCATIONAL REFORMS. AT RAMSAR CONFERENCE ON DEVELOPMENT AUGUST 1, HE DECREED THAT EDUCATION THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE SHOULD BE FREE, AS SHOULD SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THOSE WILLING TO SERVE GOI AFTER TRAINING (REFTEL C). IN SEPTEMBER 1 SPEECH TO RAMSAR CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION, SHAH ANNOUNCED TAKEOVER OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS, URGED IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL METHODS, AND SAID IRAN WOULD NOT SERVE AS "FACTORY" FOR TURNING OUT DOCTORS AND OTHER TRAINED PERSONNEL FOR THE WEST. EDUCATION SPOKESMAN HAS SAID PRIVATE COLLEGES WOULD ALSO BE TAKEN OVER IN FUTURE, BUT MINISTER CONCERNED HAS DENIED ANY SUCH PLANS YET MADE. IMPLEMENTATION OF SOME OF THESE PROGRAMS HAS BEGUN. ABOUT 30,000 TUITION GRANTS HAVE BEEN PAID TO COLLEGE STUDENTS, AND TUITION FEES PAID TO PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE BEING REFUNDED TO PARENTS AS GOI NOW PAYS THESE FEES DIRECTLY TO SCHOOLS. NEW UNIVERSITIES ARE BEING PLANNED. NO RESTRICTIONS HAVE YET BEEN PLACED ON EMIGRATION OF TRAINED PERSONNEL (REFTEL B). ACUTELY AWARE OF IRAN'S TRAINED MANPOWER SHORTAGE OF

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SOME 700,000, SHAH IS DETERMINED BOTH TO TRAIN MORE SKILLED

PEOPLE IN IRAN AND TO INCREASE EFFORTS TO RECRUIT QUALIFIED PEOPLE TO WORK IN IRAN. END SUMMARY.

1. PLAN AND BUDGET ORGANIZATION ESTIMATES IRAN'S SHORTAGE OF TRAINED MANPOWER AT SOME 700,000 MORE THAN DOUBLE 300,000 ANNUAL GROWTH IN LABOR FORCE. SHAH WANTS PRIORITY GIVEN TO IMPROVING DOMESTIC EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING FACILITIES, BUT SEES NEED TO BRING IN FOREIGN TECHNICIANS IN MEANTIME. HE WANTS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO BE OPENED UP AND IMPROVED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. IN SPEECHES TO RAMSAR CONFERENCE ON DEVELOPMENT AUGUST 1 AND 2, SHAH ORDERED THAT FIRST EIGHT YEARS OF EDUCATION BE FREE AT BOTH NORMAL AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS AND THAT STUDENTS RECEIVE DAILY MILK AND PROTEIN RATION FROM STATE. SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE TO BE OFFERED FREE EDUCATION IN RETURN FOR COMMITMENT TO WORK FOR GOI AFTER GRADUATION.

2. SHAH'S SEPTEMBER 1 SPEECH TO RAMSAR CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION BROADENED HIS PROGRAM TO INCLUDE EDUCATIONAL REFORMS SUCH AS TEXTBOOK IMPROVEMENT AND USE OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION. IN THAT SPEECH HE ANNOUNCED "TAKEOVER" OF ALL PRIVATE SCHOOLS, ALLEGING THAT "PETTY, CORRUPT ACTS" BY SOME OF THESE INSTITUTIONS MADE STEP NECESSARY. (SCHOOLS TEACHING SPECIALIZED CULTURAL COURSES WERE EXEMPTED). SHAH STRESSED IT WAS ILLEGAL TO PREVENT A CHILD FROM GOING TO SCHOOL. HE SPECIFIED THAT AFTER COMPLETING FREE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN EXCHANGE FOR COMMITMENT TO SERVE GOI, STUDENT COULD GO TO UNIVERSITY AT GOI EXPENSE IF HE SIGNED CONTRACT TO WORK TWO YEARS FOR EVERY ONE OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION. FURTHERMORE, HE ENCOURAGED BUSINESS AND OTHER EMPLOYERS TO MAKE SAME ARRANGEMENTS WITH PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES. CITING STATISTICS SHOWING THAT 80 PERCENT OF PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY'S MEDICAL STUDENTS GO TO U.S. AFTER GRADUATION, SHAH PROMISED THAT IRAN WOULD TAKE STEPS TO FORCE DOCTORS TO COMPLETE PERIOD OF SERVICE FOR GOI BEFORE GOING ABROAD UNLESS THEY PAY FOR COST OF THEIR EDUCATION.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE AMBITIOUS PLANS IS UNDERWAY. PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAD ALREADY RECEIVED DEPOSITS ON ENTERING STUDENTS WHEN TAKEOVER ANNOUNCED. SOME HAVE REFUNDED TUITION PAYMENTS TO PARENTS, SOME HAVE NOT YET DONE SO. SCHOOLS ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEING PAID FOR EACH STUDENT'S TUITION UPON APPLICATION TO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. PRESS OF OCTOBER 9 CARRIED STORIES ATTRIBUTED TO MINISTRY SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION THAT GOI ALSO PLANS TO TAKE OVER THE 40 PRIVATE COLLEGES IN IRAN, BUT UNDERSECRETARY AKBARI OF THAT MINISTRY TOLD EMBOOFF THIS IS NOT GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY. MINISTER SAMII NEXT DAY DENIED THAT ANY PLANS FOR SUCH A STEP HAD YET BEEN MADE. TAKEOVER OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS MEANS GOI HAS ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH

EDUCATIONAL SHORTCOMINGS AS LACK OF STAFF AND ADEQUATE FACILITIES. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF SOME 35,000 TEACHERS IN IRAN. POTENTIAL EXISTS FOR USE OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION TO ALLEVIATE THIS SHORTAGE, BUT THIS IS ONLY IN THE PLANNING STAGES. WITHIN LAST YEAR SOME 700 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN BUILT, BUT MORE ARE NEEDED. THE REVISED FIFTH PLAN HAS ALLOCATED 130 BILLION RIALS (ABOUT \$1.9 BILLION) FOR EDUCATION, INCLUDING 20 BILLION RIALS (\$297 MILLION) FOR FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION. IN HIS SPEECH OPENING PARLIAMENT OCTOBER 5 SHAH NOTED FREE EDUCATION WOULD COST 32 BILLION RIALS (\$474 MILLION) IN CURRENT IRANIAN YEAR ALONE (REFTEL A). (THIS HIGHER FIGURE PRESUMABLY INCLUDES SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS). THOUGH IMPRESSIVE, \$1.9 BILLION FIGURE FOR EDUCATION REPRESENTS INCREASE OF ONLY 2.4 PERCENT OVER PRELIMINARY PLAN ESTIMATES, SMALLEST IN ANY AREA OF REVISED FIFTH PLAN.

4. OF SOME 124,000 IRANIAN STUDENTS NOW IN UNIVERSITIES, ALMOST 41,000 WERE RECEIVING PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS WHEN NEW POLICIES WERE ANNOUNCED. SOME 30,000 MORE IN PRIVATE COLLEGES HAVE APPLIED FOR AND ARE RECEIVING TUITION GRANTS IN EXCHANGE FOR COMMITMENT TO SERVE GOI IF POSITION OFFERED. MILITARY SERVICES COUNTS AS PART OF COMMITMENT, SO MANY COLLEGE SENIORS HAVE SIGNED UP TO OBTAIN YEAR'S TUITION WITH ONLY TWO YEARS OF MILITARY SERVICE NEEDED TO REPAY GRANT.

5. GOI IS CONTINUING EFFORTS TO BRING IRANIAN STUDENTS BACK TO IRAN AFTER COMPLETION OF STUDIES BY OFFERING THEM SPECIFIC JOBS AND PLAYING UP NEED FOR TRAINED PEOPLE IN TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCING IRAN. IT HAS ESTABLISHED STUDENT AFFAIRS COORDINATION COUNCIL UNDER PRIME MINISTER TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO IRANIAN STUDENTS OVERSEAS. MEANWHILE, GOI IS STUDYING PLAN TO SEND MISSION TO ASIAN AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO RECRUIT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOREIGNERS FOR POSITIONS FOR WHICH NO QUALIFIED IRANIAN HAS BEEN FOUND.

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-03 EB-03 SIL-01 LAB-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8545

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6. IMPROVEMENT OF IRANIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IS ALSO UNDER WAY. BUDGET FOR TEHRAN UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM \$70 TO \$84 MILLION. GROUND HAS BEEN BROKEN FOR UNIVERSITY IN BALUCHISTAN PROVINCE. KHORASAN AND OTHER REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES WILL BE EXPANDED. SHAH HAS ANNOUNCED CREATION OF REZA SHAH UNIVERSITY IN MAZANDARAN PROVINCE, A GRADUATE UNIVERSITY WHICH WILL PROVIDE ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING EQUIVALENT TO FOREIGN STANDARDS. AVOIDING EXCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIP WHICH PAHLAVI HAS WITH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, REZA SHAH UNIVERSITY WILL ESTABLISH TIES WITH CONSORTIUM OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES, ONE FOR EACH FACULTY. (SO FAR ALL OF THESE ARE U.S.: HARVARD--MEDICAL SCHOOL, USC--ENGINEERING, AND CWU--BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, BUT OTHER COUNTRIES' UNIVERSITIES COULD APPLY.) ACCORDING TO UNDERSECRETARY AKBARI, NEW UNIVERSITY WILL OPEN IN TEHRAN SEPTEMBER 1975, PENDING COMPLETION OF MAZANDARAN CAMPUS. FIVE HUNDRED STUDENTS WILL BE ENROLLED AND THOSE IN EACH FACULTY WILL STUDY UNDER PROFESSORS PROVIDED BY CONTRACTING UNIVERSITY.

7. BU ALI UNIVERSITY AT HAMADAN IS EXPECTED TO SPECIALIZE IN TRAINING RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEACHERS. GOI HAS JOINT PROJECT WITH UNESCO TO BUILD 30 VOCATIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS AT TOTAL COST OF \$70 MILLION, SOME \$19 MILLION OF WHICH MAY COME FROM WORLD BANK LOAN.

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8. A "FREE UNIVERSITY" IS BEING ESTABLISHED AND WILL MAKE USE OF EDUCATIONAL SATELLITES. IT WILL OFFER DEGREES TO THOSE REGISTERED FOR TELEVISED INSTRUCTION.

9. NO SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN PLACED ON IRANIAN DOCTORS OR OTHER PROFESSIONALS PLANNING TO EMIGRATE (REFTEL B),

BUT AMONG IMPEDIMENTS BEING CONSIDERED IS LARGE BOND REPRESENTING COST OF THEIR EDUCATION WHICH WOULD BE FORFEITED IF THEY DID NOT RETURN TO IRAN. THOSE WHO FULFILL SOME COMMITMENT TO GOI, SUCH AS ESTABLISHMENT BY DOCTOR OF PROVINCIAL CLINIC WOULD BE EXEMPTED.

10. COMMENT: LIMITATIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION THESE REFORMS ARE NOT FINANCIAL BUT ORGANIZATIONAL AND TECHNICAL. FACILITIES CAN BE IMPROVED MORE EASILY THAN QUALITY OF EDUCATION. THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION OF INCREASING SALARIES, THOUGH THIS NEEDED TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS AT ALL LEVELS. MAJOR ROLE TO BE PLAYED BY U.S. UNIVERSITIES IS GRATIFYING PROOF OF ESTEEM IN WHICH OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS HELD. POTENTIAL EXISTS FOR ADDITIONAL U.S. UNIVERSITIES TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPING REZA SHAH UNIVERSITY. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED COOPERATION OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION IN SPONSORING SEMINAR ON U.S. EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH EXHIBITION AT TRADE CENTER IN MID-NOVEMBER BY 25 AMERICAN FIRMS PRODUCING AUDIO-VISUAL AND OTHER TEACHING EQUIPMENT. THIS MAY LEAD TO FURTHER U.S. PARTICIPATION IN IRAN'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

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